

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.-19. (canceled)

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20. (currently amended) A communications system comprising a plurality of client side and server side computing elements, each computing element supported by a distributed processing environment whereby distributed software objects in different physical parts of the system interact by passing messages via data communications links, the communications system including service generic code and service specific code, which is distributed between said plurality of computing elements during a service session, wherein the service generic code supports a plurality of differing types of service during a service session, said service generic code when in use comprising:

a session manager which performs functions generic to said plurality of differing types of service during service sessions;

for each type of said differing types of service, said session manager is arranged during a service session in which a plurality of participants participate, to generate ~~an~~ a separate event message in response to a each discrete change of a session-related status of an individual one of the plurality of participants in the session, the discrete changes in the session-related status of each of the individual participants including each individual participant joining the session and that same individual participant leaving the session,

separate event messages respectively indicating the joining and leaving of the session of that same individual participant,

wherein a service-session event handler receives [[a]] logically uncombined events transmitted in ~~an~~ the separate event messages respectively generated in response to each change in the session-related status of ~~at least some of~~ said plurality of participants without any historical data; and

the service session event handler determines respective charges for each particular participant's participation in the session based on that participant's discrete changes in status including that individual participant's joining and leaving the session as well as each of the other participant's changes in status including each of the other participant's joining and leaving the session.

21. (previously presented) The communications system as in claim 20, wherein the computing elements include:

a retailer server;

a plurality of third party servers, each third party server being arranged to have access to a data base for the storage and retrieval of service related data; and

a plurality of user terminals connected to the retailer server via a data communications network.

22. (currently amended) The communications system as in claim 21, wherein the third ~~party~~ party servers are connected remotely to the retailer server via

communications links.

23. (previously presented) The communications system as in claim 21,
wherein the third party servers are co-located with the retailer server.

24. (previously presented) The communications system as in claim 21,
wherein the retailer server comprises one or more servers interconnected in a network.

25. (previously presented) The communications system as in claim 21,
wherein at least one of said plurality of third party servers comprises a plurality of servers
interconnected in a network.

26. (previously presented) The communications system as in claim 21,
wherein at least one of the user terminals comprises a mobile communications terminal.

27. (currently amended) The communications system as in claim 20,
wherein said service-session event handler comprises a pricing data processor for pricing
~~a participant's usage of a service during a service session~~ determining said charges.

28. (previously presented) The communications system as in claim 27,
wherein said pricing data processor is arranged to perform service-specific processing of
said event messages.

29. (previously presented) The communications system as claimed in claim 20, wherein said service-session event handler comprises a service usage monitor for storing and/or analyzing usage of said services over statistically significant numbers of service sessions.

30. (previously presented) The communications system as claimed in claim 20, wherein said service-session event handler comprises a cost data processor for costing a service provided by a third party during a service session.

31. (previously presented) The communications system as claimed in claim 20, wherein said service-session event handler comprises an event message multiplier for copying said event messages and distributing said copied messages to a plurality of event processors.

32.-35. (canceled)

36. (currently amended) In a telecommunications system, an apparatus arranged to generate billing records for participation in a service session, in which a plurality of participants participate, provided by the telecommunications system, said apparatus comprising:

means to receive logically uncombined events transmitted in respective separate event messages indicating respective discrete changes in the session-related status of at

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~~least some of individual participants in said service session without any historical data,~~
the discrete changes in the session-related status of each of the individual participants
including each individual participant joining the session and that same individual
participant leaving the session, separate event messages respectively indicating the
joining and leaving of the session of that same individual participant; and

means to generate a plurality of billing records each containing data indicating a charge for a different individual participant's participation in said service session, wherein a billing record indicating a charge for a particular participant's participation in said service session includes data derived from logically uncombined events transmitted in respective separate event messages indicating respective discrete changes in the session-related status of each of the individual participants' joining and leaving the session indicated in separate messages as well as respective separate messages indicating the respective discrete changes in the session-related status of at least one other participant's joining and leaving of the session such that charge indicated for each of the individual participants is dependent on the status of that same individual participant and the status of the at least one other participant~~, at least one of the other participants in said service session, such that the charge indicated for said particular participant is dependent on logically uncombined events indicating the respective change in status of said other participants during said service session.~~

37. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the charge indicated for said particular participant is dependent on the number of other

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participants in said service session.

38. (canceled)

39. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 37, wherein the charges indicated for said other participants are dependent only on logically uncombined events indicating respective changes in statuses of the respective participants for which the billing records are produced.

40.-48. (canceled)

49. (currently amended) A communications service provision support system which supports multiple different types of services during service sessions, said system when in use comprising:

a service-session manager which performs functions generic to each of said multiple different types of services during service sessions, ~~said support system being characterized by:~~ for each of said multiple types of service, said service-session manager being arranged to instantiate a service-generic service session object to control each service-session, the service-generic service session ~~object speech-objects each~~ being arranged, during a service session in which a plurality of participants participate to:

generate during the service-session a plurality of separate, service-generic service-session behavior related event messages, each event message indicating a

logically uncombined event containing no history data, each logically uncombined event indicating a discrete and immediate change in the service-session behavior related status of an individual one of said plurality of participants of the service-session, the ~~logically uncombined events in~~ respective event messages being generated for at least some of said plurality of participants; and

transmit said events in the respective event messages being generated for at least some of the plurality of participants ~~to a service-generic event handler for processing;~~

~~wherein the a~~ service-generic event handler which receives the transmitted events in the respective separate event messages from each of said service-generic service session objects, and processes the events in the respective event messages from each of the service-generic service session objects, the processing including determining a charge for at least some of the plurality of participants based on that participant's discrete and immediate changes in status including that individual participant's joining and leaving the session as well as each of the other participant's discrete and immediate changes in status including the each of the other participant's joining and leaving the session.

50. (currently amended) A computer-implemented method of generically notifying service-generic service-session behavior related events to a service-generic event handler ~~for and processing the events in the service-generic event handler,~~ the events occurring during a plurality of service sessions in which a plurality of participants participate, the service-sessions being provided in a communications service provision

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support system, said method comprising:

for at least some of the participants in each service-session, generating during said service-sessions a plurality of ~~said~~ separate service-generic service-session behavior related event messages, each event message containing a logically uncombined event containing no history data and comprising a discrete and immediate change in the service-session behavior related status of an individual one of said plurality of participants of the service-session, the discrete and immediate changes in the service session-related status of each of the plurality of participants of the service-session including each individual participant joining the session and that same individual participant leaving the session, separate event messages respectively indicating the joining and leaving of the session of that same individual participant; and

transmitting said plurality of the separate service-generic service-session behavior related event messages each containing a logically uncombined event to a service-generic event handler ~~for processing~~, from each of said service sessions; and

processing in the service-generic event handler the events contained in the separate event messages, the processing including determining a charge for each of the participants based on that participant's discrete and immediate changes in status including that individual participant's joining and leaving the session as well as at least one of the other participant's discrete and immediate changes in status including the other participant's joining and leaving the session.

51.-61. (canceled)

62. (new) In a telecommunications system, an apparatus arranged to generate billing records for participation in a service session in which a plurality of participants participate, the service session being provided by the telecommunications system, said apparatus comprising:

means for generating event messages indicating discrete changes in the session-related status of individual participants in said service session, said changes including at least a participant joining the session and that same participant leaving the session, and wherein separate messages are generated in respect of the participant joining the session and in respect of that same participant leaving the session; and

event-handling means for receiving said event messages and generating a plurality of billing records each containing data indicating a charge for a respective different individual participant's participation in said service session, wherein the generation of a billing record for a particular participant's participation in said service session is performed as a function both of event messages indicating discrete changes in the session-related status of that particular participant and of event messages indicating discrete changes in the session-related status of at least one of the other participant(s) in said service session, such that the charge indicated for said particular participant is dependent on the status of said other participant(s) during said service session and the status of said particular participant.

63. (new) In a telecommunications system, a computer implemented method of generating billing records for participation in a service session in which a plurality of

participants participate, the service session being provided by the telecommunications system, the method comprising:

generating event messages indicating discrete changes in the session-related status of participants in said service session, the changes in the session-related status of participants including each individual participant joining the session and that same individual participant leaving the session, wherein separate messages are generated in respect to each participant joining the session and in respect of that same participant leaving a session; and

processing the generated event messages to generate a plurality of billing records each containing data indicating a charge for a respective different participant's participation in said service session, wherein the generation of a billing record for a particular participant's participation in said service session is performed as a function both of event messages indicating discrete changes in the session-related status of that particular participant and of event messages indicating discrete changes in the session-related status of at least one of the other participants in said service session, such that the charge indicated for said particular participant is dependent on its own status during the service session and the status of said at least one of the other participants during said service session.